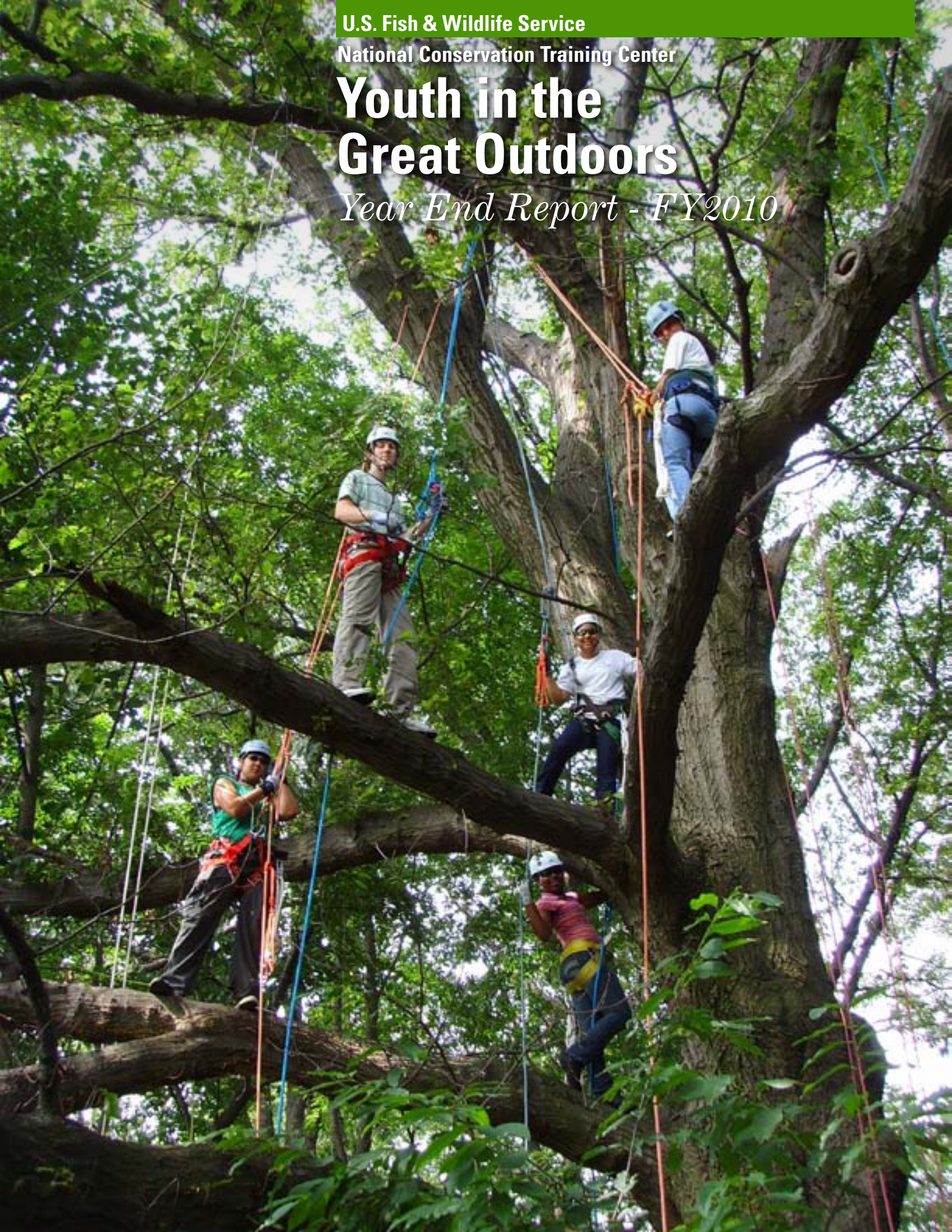


U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

National Conservation Training Center

# Youth in the Great Outdoors

*Year End Report - FY2010*





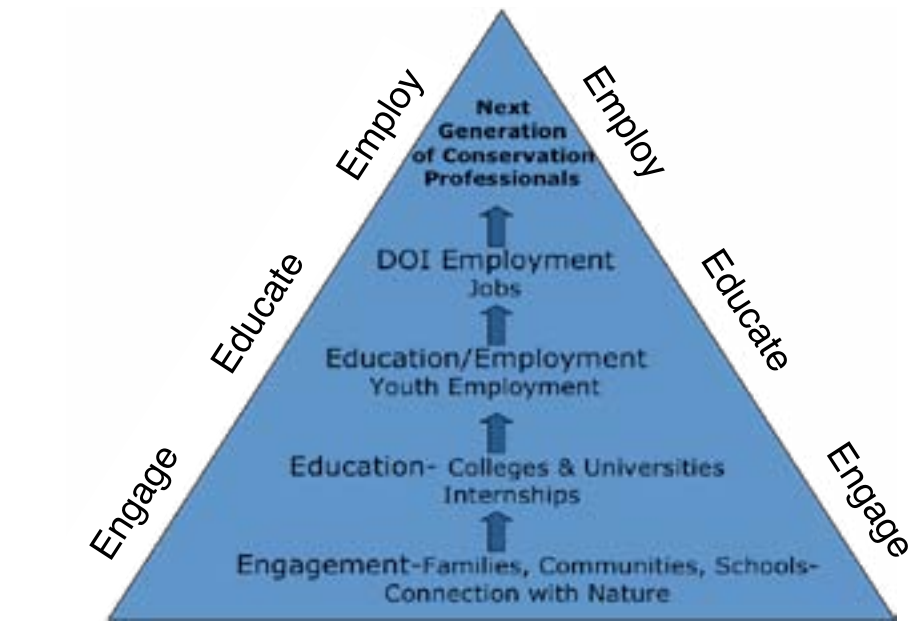
In FY 2010, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s (USFWS) National Conservation Training Center (NCTC) and the Department of the Interior (Department) began full implementation of the Youth in the Great Outdoors (YGO) Initiative, as planned and prescribed in the NCTC Youth in the Great Outdoors Leadership Development Strategic Plan (Plan). The Plan is broken into program components: **Interagency Coordination, Professional Development, and Career Awareness.**

To most efficiently achieve results, the focus in FY 2010 was to leverage impact and funds through internal and external partnerships. Potential model programs were supported in order to provide short-term successes suitable for adaptation and replication elsewhere and for use as best practice examples in training courses and workshops.

Efforts under each of the Plan’s focus areas were linked to the goals of the Department’s Youth in the Great Outdoors Office: Engage, Educate and Employ. While other program areas in the USFWS, such as the National Wildlife Refuge System, also executed programs related to the YGO in FY 2010, this report only details the progress and accomplishments of efforts by the NCTC. A table at the end of this report maps the various projects and activities of both NCTC’s YGO strategic goals and the “Three E” goals of the Department’s YGO Office.

Activities of the USFWS’s “Connecting People with Nature” initiative serves as a foundation of engagement for the YGO initiative. The activities and programs, developed for youth under high school age, have engaged this age group in conservation and prepared them for the next steps prescribed in the NCTC Youth in the Great Outdoors Leadership Development Program Strategic Plan. The diagram above shows the programmatic progression of the Youth Initiative, starting with engagement through Connecting People with Nature programs and progressing to education and finally employment, with the ultimate goal being a next generation of conservation professionals who will serve both the Service and the Department.

To begin to achieve the effort mapped out in the Plan, a number of steps were undertaken by NCTC. These included the establishment of a restructured Division of Education Outreach (DEO); the enhancement of existing partnerships and establishment of new



Programmatic Progression of the YGO Initiative

partnership efforts to achieve YGO goals; creation of collaborative tools to ensure robust coordination with the Department of the Interior (DOI) and its bureaus pursuing YGO efforts; identification and dissemination of best practices; and creation of an evaluation to measure effectiveness of YGO efforts and initiatives.

Interagency Coordination

Working closely with the YGO Office, the NCTC played a significant interagency role in FY 2010. Coordination and collaboration among the bureaus within the Department of the Interior are key components of the YGO initiative. The Department established several entities to facilitate coordination, program alignment, and interagency communication. These include the DOI YGO Office, the DOI Youth in the Great Outdoors Coordination Council (Council), and the Youth in the Great Outdoors Task Force (Task Force), the latter of which is comprised of bureau personnel representing their respective youth programs.

The Department’s YGO Office works with support from the NCTC to coordinate and communicate to the Office of the Secretary the various Department-wide YGO efforts. This enhances the ability of the Department and its bureaus to effectively share success stories, to learn from others’ best practices, and to develop new tools to attract youth to careers in the natural resource community.

Key activities for FY 2010 included:

**Establishment of the NCTC YGO Office:** NCTC worked closely with the DOI YGO Office to identify Departmental and bureau needs for administrative support, coordination, and appropriate levels of assistance and oversight.

Three positions were established in the DOI YGO Office. Two program analysts were hired at the GS-9 level and one GS-13 FWS liaison position was advertised. In addition, a Branch Chief for Interagency Coordination position, located in the FWS Arlington Office, was filled.

To provide interim coordination and communication during the hiring process, NCTC staffed the Interagency Branch Chief position in Arlington with senior personnel on short-term work assignments. Senior staff from NCTC also served on a rotating basis to represent NCTC at DOI YGO Task Force meetings, DOI Listening Sessions, and other matters of coordination with the Department and the DOI bureaus.

**Reorganization of the NCTC Division of Education Outreach:** In FY 2010, the NCTC reorganized its Division of Education Outreach to focus on the wide range of YGO activities. The new organization reflects the existing strengths NCTC offers in professional development and career awareness program support and distance learning, while adding an interagency coordination component. A new division

chief and special assistant positions were established, with three supporting branches within the Division. Three new assistant course leaders, two biologists, and an outdoor recreation planner were added to the Division’s staff to support and better execute the range of YGO activities.

**Youth in the Great Outdoors Leadership Development Strategic Plan:** The Youth in the Great Outdoors Leadership Development Strategic Plan was developed to guide the activities of the National Conservation Training Center management and staff to carry out the Secretary of the Interior’s Youth in the Great Outdoors Initiative. A plan outline was presented and approved by the DOI YGO Office at the start of FY 2010.

Professional Development

Building capacity among current employees in FWS and DOI to reach the largest number of young people, and providing wide opportunities for youth internships are key pieces to the Professional Development track of NCTC’s YGO strategic plan. In FY 2010, the NCTC conducted curricula development and enhancement to provide a wide range of courses and

professional development opportunities for USFWS and DOI personnel. This work conveyed the best practices in youth engagement to ensure that Departmental bureaus and their employees have the skills and the program resources they need to engage, educate, mentor, and employ youth.

Working with both DOI and other partners, the NCTC worked to build youth internship programs that educate youth in conservation activities and introduce conservation employment opportunities within the Department and beyond. Efforts were also made to begin the evaluation process to measure YGO program success in the short, medium, and long terms.

Key activities for FY 2010 included:

**Conservation Development Internship Program (CDIP):** NCTC conducted a pilot design meeting in August 2010 at NCTC. The following bureaus and offices were represented: DOI YGO Office of Youth, BLM, BIA, BOR, NPS, OSM and USFWS. It was decided that each bureau would offer a pilot CDIP in 2011 targeting under-represented students 18 – 25 years of age. A follow-up design meeting will be conducted in late 2010 at NCTC to develop this engagement opportunity for youth.



Youth in the Great Outdoors Career Display

Educators Career Awareness Pilot: Working with the National Park Service, the NCTC planned, designed, and executed a conservation career awareness pilot program. The target audience for this pilot was educators and school counselors, who were briefed on conservation career opportunities at the various bureaus within the Department. Formal programs will be conducted in FY 2011 at sites around the country in close proximity to DOI sites such as National Wildlife Refuges and National Parks.

“Anyone who invests his or her time in the life of a youth, not only will change the life of that youth but will change the world as those youth become tomorrow’s leaders.”

- Wildlife Habitat Evaluation Program Student Participant

**75th North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference:** NCTC sponsored the attendance of the 4-H Programs of Distinction youth recipients for conference attendance and to receive the Service’s “Connecting Youth with Nature through Natural Resources Conservation Education Award” for 2010. This annual award includes \$10,000 for a 4-H Program of Distinction and travel for up to five program representatives, including at least two 4-H members to attend the conference.

**YGO Evaluation:** NCTC entered into a cooperative agreement with West Virginia University to design and execute evaluation programs to measure effectiveness of a wide range of YGO programs and initiatives. These services will be available to all bureaus in the Department.

Career Awareness

Working with federal, state, and non-governmental organization partners provides myriad venues and opportunities to introduce youth to natural resource careers within the Department of the Interior. It also provides opportunities for the Service and DOI bureaus to target, engage, educate, and employ underserved and underrepresented audiences. This third strategic track also includes myriad engagement projects for younger people,



to ensure they have an early connection with the outdoors, a core requirement before topics such as careers in natural resources are even relevant to them.

In FY 2010, NCTC developed a variety of education and outreach tools, as well as enhancing existing materials and programs, to engage and educate youth about careers within DOI. Electronic field trips and career awareness tools were developed to assist federal natural resource employees with career-related youth activities. Many student internship programs were also supported by NCTC to provide work experiences, attend professional conferences, and expose students to potential careers in natural resources.

Key activities for FY 2010 included:

**Boy Scouts of America National Jamboree:** NCTC continues its support of efforts to connect young people with nature through participation in the Boy Scouts of America (BSA) National Scout Jamboree, which in 2010 commemorated the BSA’s 100th anniversary. NCTC coordinated the USFWS national involvement in the Jamboree by coordinating 61 Service employees who staffed a 17 acre conservation/ environment trail. This trail included interactive exhibits from more than 20 federal, state, and non-government agencies and organizations. The scouts learned about careers in refuge management, endangered species protection, and migratory bird conservation. NCTC also provided a career exhibit on the Conservation Trail and presented a natural resources

career program at a special evening career event. A total of 45,000 Boy Scouts from 50 states and 26 foreign nations participated in the Jamboree, and thousands participated in this interagency effort.

*“This experience has been more amazing than I imagined. I learned how to be an integral part of a diverse community, while completing amazing conservation work.”*

*- Margaret, Roving Crew Member*

**NCTC Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) Summer 2010 Hires:** NCTC hired 12 YCC students during the summer 2010, providing them exposure to and experience of NCTC’s conservation mission. Five students participated in outdoor resource work, which included extensive fence removal, trail remediation, reforestation, area maintenance, invasive plant control, river shore cleanup, recycling, nursery maintenance and landscaping, and boundary marking. Two YCC students working in the museum completed cataloging, digitization, and conservation of 3,100 original artworks from the National Wildlife Federation art collection. Division of Education Outreach (DEO) students worked to support YGO activities; and the Facility Operations YCC students provided support for the business services branch.

**Creston National Fish Hatchery YCC:** NCTC supported the program between Creston National Fish Hatchery, USFWS Fisheries Program, Salish Kootenai College, and the Confederated Salish Kootenai Tribes Natural Resources Department to promote creation of jobs leading to careers in natural resources for tribal youth. This was done through the establishment of a Tribal Youth Conservation Corps project on the Flathead Reservation and at the Creston National Fish Hatchery in Kalispell, Montana. The program included 2 college aged students and 22 high school aged students.

**Student Climate Change and Conservation Congress (SC3):** NCTC sponsored and hosted the second annual SC3 in partnership with the Green Schools Alliance. This weeklong youth congress brings 100 of the nation’s top high school and rising college students to NCTC to interact with prominent scientists, conservation leaders, and environmental thinkers. In 2010, speakers included oceanographer Sylvia Earle, writer and field naturalist Robert Michael Pyle, activist Bill McKibben, and Service Deputy Director Dan Ashe. The SC3 curriculum was developed at NCTC and included a number of conservation themes, such as science, inspiration and design, and the role of the arts in conservation. Each student was charged in the last session to become part of the Green School Alliance’s Student Climate and Conservation Corps, and thus become conservation leaders at their schools and in their communities. Social media is being used to keep students informed and networking.



Tribal YCC crew doing wetland restoration work at Charlo Ponds, Montana

# Detailed Program Summaries

The following section provides a more detailed listing of various FY 2010 program activities within each of the three strategic program areas: Interagency Coordination, Professional Development, and Career Awareness.

## Interagency Coordination

Accomplishments for the year for this strategic program area include:

### A) Organizational Development

**1) Establishment of the NCTC Youth Office:** NCTC worked closely with the DOI YGO Office to identify Departmental and bureau needs for administrative support, coordination, and appropriate levels of assistance and oversight.

Three positions were established in the DOI Youth Office. Two program analysts were hired at the GS-9 level and one GS-13 FWS liaison position was advertised. In addition, a branch chief for Interagency Coordination position was filled, located in the FWS Arlington Office.

To provide interim coordination and communication during the hiring process, NCTC staffed the Interagency Branch Chief position in Arlington with senior personnel on short-term work assignments. Senior staff from NCTC also served on a rotating basis to represent NCTC at DOI YGO Task Force meetings, DOI Listening Sessions, and other matters of coordination with the Department and the DOI bureaus.

**2) Reorganization of the NCTC Division of Education Outreach (DEO):** In FY 2010, the NCTC reorganized its Division of Education Outreach to focus on the wide range of YGO activities. The new organization reflects the existing strengths NCTC offers in professional development

and career awareness program support and distance learning, while adding an interagency coordination component. A new division chief and special assistant positions were established, with three supporting branches within the Division. Three new assistant course leaders, two biologists, and an outdoor recreation planner were added to the Division’s staff to support and better execute the range of YGO activities.

**2) Needs Assessment/Long Term Monitoring and Tracking:** In the spring of 2010, NCTC assessed the needs of the Department and each of its bureaus regarding the actions planned to facilitate interagency coordination, professional development, and career awareness. A survey was administered to the DOI YGO Task Force, with each Task Force member responsible for gathering bureau-specific information. The



### B) Program Administration, Coordination and Oversight

**1) Youth in the Great Outdoors Leadership Development Strategic Plan:** The YGO Leadership Development Strategic Plan was developed to guide the activities of the National Conservation Training Center management and staff to carry out the Secretary of the Interior’s YGO Initiative. A plan outline was presented and approved by the DOI YGO Office at the start of FY 2010. In November of 2009, NCTC conducted a planning workshop to develop an implementation plan for the strategy. The Director of the National Conservation Training Center subsequently approved the final five-year plan.

survey’s purpose was to identify ways to improve interagency collaboration; use tools and activities that would meet mutual objectives; and facilitate how NCTC’s services can facilitate Departmental/bureau progress toward accomplishing YGO goals. Key findings included:

- Bureau training needs;
- How to best reach youth with career information;
- Best practices for interagency collaboration; and
- Suggestions for future interagency meetings and workshops.

**3) Grants and Cooperative Agreements with Partners:** The NCTC hired a staff specialist to streamline the grant/cooperative





DOI Youth in the Great Outdoors Web Portal

agreement process and to oversee all assistance awards. This work included the refinement and development of a step-by-step process resulting in a consistent methodology and communication with our partners and the USFWS Contracting Office.

- 4) **Facilitation Contract:** To support the success of future YGO meetings and workshops, a blanket purchase agreement for facilitation services was contracted by NCTC, which all bureaus and the Department can use to help meet identified needs for strategic planning workshops and meetings.

#### C) Meetings and Workshops

- 1) **DOI Youth in the Great Outdoors Coordination Council Meetings:** NCTC participated in the Department of the Interior YGO Council meetings during FY 2010. Council members were informed about the YGO Leadership Development Strategic Plan and NCTC's progress on the plan's action items.

- 2) **DOI YGO Task Force Meetings:** NCTC participated in weekly meetings and/or phone calls as members of the DOI YGO Task Force. This group works to encourage collaboration and work strategically to address YGO objectives.

- 3) **Strategic Planning Workshops:** A number of planning workshops were executed and/or facilitated by NCTC in FY 2010, including:
- NCTC internal strategic planning workshop to map implementation of the YGO Strategic Plan (Nov. 09);
  - FWS YGO National Workshop with the USFWS Connecting People with Nature Working Group and the USFWS Youth Coordination Team (Dec. 09);
  - The YGO Office Youth Summit facilitation by NCTC staff (Jan. 10);
  - Bureau of Land Management YGO workshop was held at NCTC, and had assistance, participation and presentations by NCTC staff (Sept. 10); and

- YGO Web Portal Workshop was held to define the audience, describe user interaction and experience, and design the look of the YGO portal website.

- 4) **Facilitated Youth Summit:** DEO staff worked with the DOI YGO Office to design a youth focus group as part of the annual Corps Network Forum. Its purpose was to solicit input on marketing strategies and products for the 18-25 year old audience they represent. (Due to a snow storm, the formal focus group did not take place, but youth were solicited informally.)

- 5) **Visioning Sessions with USFWS R9 Budget, Planning and Human Capital (BPHC):** NCTC and BPHC met four times over the first year to strategize how best to work together on YGO. Human resource functions lie within BPHC and are integral to the success of the "employ" aspect of the YGO initiative. These ongoing sessions ensure close collaboration.

*"The National Conservation Training Center is committed to advancing conservation through the hearts and minds of America's youth. In 2010, we expanded our partner network to bring together conservationists from all sectors with a focus on getting our nation's young people involved in outdoor conservation and recreation efforts."*

*- Jay Slack, Director,  
National Conservation  
Training Center*

#### D) Collaboration Tools

- 1) **Youth in the Great Outdoors Network Portal:** A beta was completed for an on-line/web portal to facilitate interagency communication, share education/career resources and foster interactive communication. This was accomplished through a collaborative process where

the various DOI bureau representatives worked together with NCTC and the YGO Office. The portal ensures a broad and varied audience on careers in natural resources. The portal will go online in December 2010.

- 2) **"Let's Go Outside!" Website:** The website is an external dynamic site targeting three primary audiences: youth, teachers, and educators. The website can be reached through a link on the USFWS home page. This site was updated regularly during the year and provided active links to current events, partners' sites, and other links that focus on connecting people with nature and careers in natural resources.

- 3) **USFWS Youth Coordination Team:** A Youth Coordination Team was established within the USFWS to provide coordination and communications regarding the YGO initiative to share opportunities and best practices. The team consists of a representative from each geographic region and each program of the USFWS. NCTC hosted weekly, bi-weekly, and then monthly conference calls all year for the team.

The team met in person at NCTC for a Youth Summit in December 2009 for an introduction to the program and to discuss its nexus with the Connecting People with Nature priority, which serves as the foundation for all YGO activities.

An FWS intranet SharePoint site was also established to facilitate YGO collaboration among regions and programs and is being actively used.

#### E) Planning, Communication Products, and Presentations

- 1) **Communications Plan:** A draft internal Outreach/Communications Plan was developed for the FWS YGO initiative. The plan outlines the management goals and key issues and lists the USFWS audiences, communication goals, objectives, and messages. After further review, the plan will be finalized and implemented by the Branch of Interagency Coordination in FY2011.

- 2) **Youth in the Great Outdoors Program Presentations:** A variety of presentations were developed to communicate the DOI YGO Initiative to DOI bureaus, DOI YGO Council, and the DOI YGO Task Force. The presentations provided an overview of NCTC's strategic plan, USFWS/NCTC's YGO Leadership Development Strategic Plan, the "continuum" from elementary school through career entry levels and its relationship to the YGO Office's objectives of "Engage, Educate and Employ."

- 3) **Presentations and Briefings:** NCTC provided numerous briefings and presentations to groups within the bureau, the Department, and to external groups throughout the year. These included briefing senior DOI officials; the FWS Directorate and deputies; the FWS Office of Budget, Planning and Human Capital; all NCTC employees; and the USFWS Youth Summit of the USFWS Connecting People with Nature and Youth Coordination Team.



FWS Let's Go Outside Web Portal



NCTC staff presented at the USFWS Region 4 Friends Conference in Florida, the National Wildlife Refuge System Birding Initiative Team in Oregon, and the Educator’s Career Awareness Workshop held in Maryland.

External audiences that received briefings included the Partners Outdoors Conference; the Corps Network Forum; the Wildlife Extension Conference; the DOI Conference on the Environment; Nature Rocks Sponsors meeting; BLM’s Youth Program Workshop; and the Doris Duke Fellows Annual Retreat.

- 4) **VOICES:** (Visitor Outreach, Interpretation, Communications, and Education Services): NCTC has recently updated this listserv to an interactive email newsletter sent directly to subscribed USFWS employees. VOICES provides valuable education and outreach resources where its 325 FWS subscribers can easily get information on the YGO and Connecting People with Nature initiatives.

*“This experience has made me realize how important new and social media actually is to the Fish & Wildlife Service. We really don’t have an outlet, especially to youth. Most youth, so to speak, aren’t going to go to a Fish & Wildlife Service site, so that was an eye-opener for me.”*  
- Stephanie Rain, Region 6, External Affairs Office

Professional Development

Accomplishments for the year for this strategic program area include:

A) Career and Intern Programs

- 1) **Conservation Development Internship Program (CDIP):** NCTC conducted a pilot design meeting in August 2010 at NCTC. The following bureaus and offices were represented: DOI YGO Office of Youth, BLM, BIA, BOR, NPS,

OSM and USFWS. It was decided that each bureau would offer a pilot CDIP in 2011 targeting under-represented students between 18 – 25 years of age. A follow-up design meeting will be conducted in late 2010 at NCTC to develop this engagement opportunity for youth.

- 2) **New Media Interns:** NCTC worked with all nine USFWS External Affairs offices to employ 19 young people to explore new media outreach venues. Regions developed proposals tailored to their individual needs. They report that the interns hired facilitated the establishment of new social media tools to communicate with external audiences. Each region’s process will be included as a successful youth employment practice on the YGO Portal.
- 3) **National Environmental Education Foundation (NEEF) Youth Engagement and Conservation Careers:** NCTC completed a cooperative agreement for the establishment of FWS supported Youth Conservation Engagement Grants through NEEF’s Planet Connect initiative. In this four-year agreement, NEEF will award 18 grants of \$1,000 each in year one, 12 grants in year two, and 10 grants annually in years three and four. These grants will be awarded to schools around the country to enhance career programs to steer students towards environmental studies in both the university and technical schools settings, better preparing students for careers in natural resource conservation.

- 4) **National Environmental Education Foundation (NEEF):** NCTC supported the development and expansion of “Career Profiles” to provide high school students with examples of conservation careers. Fifty career profiles describe individuals involved in a variety of jobs connected to conservation including nature center interpreters, facilities managers, lab technicians, training experts, and wildlife biologists. A variety of “non-biological” jobs within conservation, including information technology, administration, and accounting, are included. These profiles are posted on the Planet Connect website and include text, photos, and videos

with explanations by those profiled on what motivated them to pursue their careers, how they got their current jobs, what educational background is needed, and what advice they would give students interested in pursuing careers in conservation.

- 5) **The Wildlife Society (TWS) Interns:** USFWS/NCTC has entered into a cooperative agreement with The Wildlife Society. One of the outcomes of this agreement is to hire two interns to work with TWS and NCTC to develop education and professional development tools, curriculum, and best practices for new interns. These professional development opportunities will provide experiences for youth to make them more marketable for employment opportunities.



NCTC Director Jay Slack with 4-H Program of Distinction Award Winners

B) Supporting Conferences that Support Youth Development

- 1) **Council on Environmental Education Conference (CEE):** NCTC supported the 2010 Project WILD International Coordinators Conference, which provided professional development and networking opportunities for approximately 50 Project WILD coordinators, sponsors, partners, and other interested environmental educators. Conference sessions trained participants in new ways to assess student-learning outcomes, reach broader youth audiences

through partnerships, and better highlight conservation careers to youth target audiences.

- 2) **The Wildlife Society (TWS):** USFWS/NCTC entered into a cooperative agreement with TWS to increase youth engagement and education in the wildlife management career field. Part of the agreement includes sponsoring 10 individuals to participate in TWS Native American Wildlife Student Professional Development at TWS National Conference in Snowbird, Utah in 2010 and Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania in 2011. The NCTC also sponsored interns from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources to attend the TWS meeting and while there, they presented projects and participated in a feedback evaluation forum with conference participants.

This experience better prepares them to compete for positions in state and federal wildlife agencies.

NCTC also posted a personnel specialist at the event to discuss careers in the Service and other DOI bureaus.

- 3) **North American Association for Environmental Education (NAAEE):** NCTC supported the “NAAEE Careers and Young Professionals” initiative as part of the 2010 Annual NAAEE conference. The project included:
- Young professionals’ group

mentoring sessions – youth work with experienced employees;

- Career workshops – includes exposure to career opportunities and network;
- Career fair – a networking opportunity for employers and job seekers;
- Resume and job posting station – the opportunity to share resumes with potential employers and to view current job openings.

- 4) **Children and Nature Network (CNN) Grassroots Gathering:** NCTC sponsored the attendance of the core leadership team of the Natural Leaders Network at the annual CNN 2010 Grassroots Gathering. These young leaders worked with conference participants to facilitate plans for intergenerational leadership and nature-based service projects to engage a wide range of youth in conservation activities and programs.

- 5) **National Archery in the Schools Program@2010 U.S. National Tournament:** NCTC was a sponsor for the Archery in the Schools Program (NASP®) national tournament. Thirty-three states were represented at the tournament and the event was billed as the “largest archery tournament in the world.” A total of 6,784 boys and girls from elementary, middle, and high school teams participated and competed for team and individual awards. The top four boys and four girls competed for \$14,000 in college tuition.

- 6) **75th North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference:** NCTC sponsored the attendance of the 4-H Programs of Distinction youth recipients for conference attendance and to receive the Service’s “Connecting Youth with Nature through Natural Resources Conservation Education Award for 2010. This annual award includes \$10,000 for a 4-H Program of Distinction and travel for up to five program representatives, including at least two 4-H members to attend the conference.

- 7) **American Library Association Conference:** NCTC and the Connecting People with Nature Communications Committee

included in their communication plan the objective to bring the YGO youth careers message to the Annual American Library Association Conference in Washington, D.C. This conference was attended by over 19,000 with over 6,000 exhibitors. USFWS exhibit was busy for all three days of the conference allowing the introduction of the YGO initiative to this new audience.

*“As a Baby Boomer currently working in an office full of Millennials, this will help provide some context in ways to cement interactions with them.”*  
- Marcus Hathaway, WASO Senior Budget Analyst for ARRA National Park Service

- 8) **National Science Teachers Association (NSTA) Conference:** NCTC sponsored the attendance of both NCTC and USFWS field staff involved with YGO activities at the NSTA National Conference. This is a major conference that attracts thousands of science educators each year. Service personnel met with science educators, non-formal educators, and state science curriculum specialists and briefed them on YGO work and possible partnerships.

C) Training and Professional Development

- 1) **Education and Outreach Courses:** In FY 2010, NCTC offered classroom-based courses, satellite broadcasts/webcasts, and a webinar to train USFWS and DOI employees on specific YGO related tools to engage, educate, and evaluate their audiences. For courses that were already developed, NCTC provided new modules that address DOI engagement and employment opportunities:

- a) Classroom-Based
- Creating a Schoolyard Habitat/Outdoor Classroom;
  - Education Programs for Youth: School’s Out.



- b) Satellite broadcasts/webcasts in partnership with NPS
  - Introduction to Evaluation of Interpretation and Education;
  - Evaluating Interpretation and Education: Getting Started; and
  - Simple Interpretive and Education Evaluation Tools.

- c) NCTC satellite broadcast
  - Bridging the Gaps: Working with Multiple Generations.

- d) Webinar
  - Brown bag seminar on Evaluation Tools, with Professor Martha Monroe from the University of Florida.

**2) Educators Career Awareness Pilot:** Working with the National Park Service, the NCTC planned, designed, and executed a conservation career awareness pilot program. The target audience for this pilot was educators and school counselors, who were briefed on conservation career opportunities at the various bureaus within the Department. Formal programs will be conducted in FY 2011 at sites around the country in close proximity to DOI sites such as National Wildlife Refuges, National Parks, and National Conservation areas.

*“By giving health care providers this training, and by working with our partners to refer families to safe and accessible outdoor areas, we have created a powerful partnership that has the potential to improve the lives of our nation’s children.”*

*- National Environmental Education Foundation (NEEF)*

**3) FWS Fisheries Academy:** NCTC developed a YGO lesson plan module to present to DOI audiences while attending training at NCTC. This module was presented to the USFWS Fisheries Academy. The two-dozen students left with a better understanding of the YGO initiative and the



*Prescribing Nature: Connecting Children with Nature for Health Benefits Conference held at the National Conservation Training Center*

opportunities presented to their programs by hiring youth at their field stations.

**4) Youth Orientation Video:** USFWS/NCTC developed an orientation video for new youth hires within USFWS to educate them about the Department and the various intern and employment opportunities available, as well as an introduction to the USFWS. This video and its script were distributed to all bureaus at a DOI YGO Task Force Meeting. The bureaus could adapt these materials to develop a similar bureau-specific video or training if they determined it was needed. Several bureaus provided feedback for future versions.

**5) Wildlife Habitat Evaluation Program (WHEP):** NCTC supported the WHEP through a cooperative agreement with New Mexico State University. WHEP is a 4-H youth natural resource program dedicated to teaching wildlife and fisheries habitat management to junior and senior level youth (ages 8-19) in the United States. Participants trained in WHEP can identify common wildlife foods, judge quality of wildlife habitat from aerial photos, recommend wildlife habitat management practices, develop rural and urban wildlife management plans.

**6) TogetherGreen Youth:** NCTC supported the TogetherGreen Youth, a national competitive fellowship program, through a cooperative agreement with the National Audubon Society (NAS) and the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA). This is a national fellowship program that offers college students hands-on, professional development and real-world opportunities to learn about environmental issues, develop leadership skills, and become mentors to youth interested in conservation careers through service learning or citizen science projects.

**7) Creating Nature Champions:** NCTC supported the creation of Nature Champions through a grant agreement with the National Environmental Education Foundation (NEEF). This project is based on NEEF’s “Prescribing Nature: Connecting Children with Nature for Health Benefits” project, which was endorsed by The Conservation Fund’s National Forum on Children and Nature. NEEF worked with the Service to:

- Establish an Advisory Committee chaired by NEEF;
- Develop a Nature Kit for Public Health Champions (PHC);
- Develop and execute train-the-trainer workshops for 30 Public Health Professionals as Nature Champions (first workshop held

with great success at NCTC in September 2010);

- Begin outreach to other federal and other partners to expand the program’s link to the *Let’s Move Outside*, the outdoor recreation component to First Lady Michelle Obama’s *Let’s Move* campaign to end childhood obesity.

Overall, the program will educate more than 1,200 health care providers within two years. They will be paired with USFWS representatives who will connect them to National Wildlife Refuges, National Fish Hatcheries, and National Audubon Centers in their communities.

#### **D) Job Aids and Technical Consultation**

- 1) Evaluation:** NCTC developed a draft evaluation job aid for education and interpretive programs.
- 2) Broadcasts/Webcasts/Webinars:** NCTC provided a variety of distance-learning trainings on education and interpretation evaluation strategies and tools and intergenerational differences. These trainings were available Department-wide.
- 3) Supported and hosted the presentation of “How Fish and Wildlife Reels in Top Talent”:** This broadcast/webinar featured guest speakers from USFWS and showcased best practices in employment branding, recruitment, and outreach.

**4) National Environmental Education Foundation (NEEF) Technical Assistance:** NCTC supported NEEF in the creation of an informal network of teachers who will review and test K-12 USFWS materials and NCTC trainings. NEEF will recruit teachers from our Classroom Earth National Advisory Committee and network of high school teachers, and the National Environmental Education Week Teachers Advisory Committee.

**5) Portal Best Practice Prototype:** NCTC developed a beta template to be included in the YGO Web Portal to gather accomplishments and disseminate information on successful youth employment practices and programs. DOI

*“Rarely can the Fish and Wildlife Service reach so many youth as at the Jamboree. It’s an unparalleled opportunity to convey a national conservation message.”*

*- Dennis Stewart, Refuge Biologist, National Boy Scout Jamboree*

employees will be able to access this site to gather information about successful youth employment practices as well as complete templates to share successful youth employment practices.

#### **E) Evaluation and Assessment**

- 1) YGO Evaluation:** NCTC entered into a cooperative agreement with West Virginia University to design and execute evaluation programs to measure effectiveness of a wide range of YGO programs and initiatives. These services will be available to all bureaus in the Department.
- 2) YCC Evaluation:** NCTC worked with 3 youth employed through the Youth Conservation Corp to evaluate the effectiveness of the summer YCC program at NCTC. The YCC youth presented the results of the evaluation program during a USFWS/NPS satellite broadcast/webcast on evaluation.

**3) The Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies (AFWA):** NCTC supported the development of an evaluation plan, including recommendations for key questions, methods, and processes, to be used for a full evaluation of the North American Conservation Strategy. The project funding will be used to hire a contractor with expertise in facilitation and evaluation and to convene a session with a working group of state fish and wildlife agency conservation educators on the effort. Connecting people with nature and moving youth into conservation careers are part of AFWA’s North American Conservation Strategy.

### **Career Awareness**

Accomplishments for the year for this strategic program area include:

#### **A) Targeted Outreach to Engage Young People**

- 1) Freedom to Roam – Kids 4 Corridors Pilot Project:** NCTC established a cooperative agreement with the non-governmental organization Freedom to Roam. This partnership will allow for the development of the “Migration Miles Corridor Curriculum” for educating youth about animal migrations and wildlife corridor conservation and the development of “Kids 4 Corridors Pilot Project.” Freedom to Roam will also link these efforts to First Lady



*FWS on the National Scout Jamboree Conservation Trail, 2010*



Michelle Obama’s Lets Move campaign. Students will log their species “migration miles” and observe outcomes that highlight the importance of landscape connectivity and the careers that are integral to that conservation effort. Efforts will intensify on this project in FY 2011.

Coordinator is located at NCTC and serves as the national contact for USFWS regional scouting coordinators. The NCTC supports the website that provides bronze, silver, and gold scouting awards for conservation-related badges. Conservation careers and leadership topics are key components in

in the Jamboree, and thousands participated in the DOI interagency effort.

5) **Nature Rocks Day:** NCTC supported the Nature Rocks initiative through a grant to ecoAmerica. Nature Rocks Day was created to celebrate the start of the new school year, Take a Child Outside Week, and National Public Lands Day. Its focus is to get American families outside and enjoying nature together. Partners include USFWS, ecoAmerica, Nature Rocks, The Nature Conservancy, the Children & Nature Network, the American Heart Association, and REI.

6) **Coastal America Foundation/ Coastal America Partnership:** NCTC supported the Coastal America Foundation for planning the 3rd Student Ocean Summit Conference, to be held in February 2011. The purpose of the Summit is to teach high school students about the interconnectedness between the ocean, great lakes, inland seas, and climate with particular focus on climate change. Four students from each of the 23 Coastal Learning Centers will comprise a delegation that will work with educators to develop an action plan for a particular ocean/climate change issue in their region and present their action plan to leaders in the environmental science and policy communities.

7) **National Environmental Education Foundation (NEEF)/ Hands-on-the Land:** NCTC supported Partners in Resource Education (PRE) Hands-on-the-Land (HOL) project through a grant to NEEF, the host organization. PRE sponsors HOL, a network of field classrooms stretching across America, many which are located on public land sites. This partnership is a collaboration of federal agencies, a non-profit foundation, schools, and other private sector partners. Through HOL, federal agencies provide a diverse array of hands-on learning opportunities for teachers and students on public lands and waterways, which include e-learning courses, educational resources, and environmental monitoring assistance. The HOL program is being expanded to state and local lands.

8) **Student Climate Change and Conservation Congress (SC3):** NCTC sponsored and hosted the second annual SC3 in partnership with the Green Schools Alliance. This weeklong youth congress brings 100 of the nation’s top high school and rising college students to NCTC to interact with top scientists, conservation leaders, and environmental thinkers. In 2010, speakers included oceanographer Sylvia Earle, writer and field naturalist Robert Michael Pyle, activist Bill McKibben, and Service Deputy Director Dan Ashe. The SC3 curriculum was developed at NCTC and included a number of conservation themes, such as conservation ideas, science, inspiration and design, and the role of the arts in conservation. Each student was charged in the last session to become part of the Green School Alliance’s Student Climate and Conservation Corps, and thus become conservation leaders at their schools and in their communities. Social media is being used to keep students informed and networking.

9) **FWS Connecting People with Nature (CPWN) Communications Campaign:** NCTC implemented a strategic communication campaign developed by the Service’s CPWN Working Group. The campaign was designed to provide a variety of activities linked to annual events that engage the American people in nature and conservation activities and programs.

Projects included:

a) **Fall in Love with Nature:** Valentine’s Day was the focus of falling in love with nature in your own backyard or at one of America’s national wildlife refuges. It included electronic valentines, in both English and Spanish. The valentines featured bald eagles, red foxes, and turtles, as well as wildlife

fact sheets, tips on observing wildlife, and maps of locations to get outside.

b) **Share Your Passion Portable Exhibits:** The CPWN Working Group designed and developed new portable CPWN “pop-up” displays to incorporate the YGO message. New text and photos of youth outside and in conservation careers were incorporated. Each USFWS region was provided a display to use throughout their own regions for appropriate events. Exhibits are also considered part of the Career Awareness Kits, so easy to use activities with specific career awareness objectives can be used at the exhibits with a variety of audiences in a variety of venues.

11) **Shorebird Sister Schools Program (SSSP):** NCTC supported the development of supplementary education activities to the Shorebird Sister Schools Program curriculum. The new activities highlight careers of natural resource professionals from a variety of job series who were deployed to conserve aquatic birds and other wildlife in the wake of the Gulf oil spill and the comprehensive recovery work. The audiences are middle school classes engaged in bird and wetland related study units. The new oil spill career educational activities will be posted on-line on the SSSP website.

12) **Neighborhood Explorers:** This web-based program was designed in partnership with Utah State University and LetterPress Software specifically for 8-11 year olds and their educators and caregivers. The USFWS’s Neighborhood Explorers interactive website works like a virtual field trip and is geared to reach those children not currently participating in outdoor programs and activities. Through its Neighborhood Explorers website and other activities of the Let’s Go Outside: Ensuring a Legacy of Conservation priority, the USFWS creates a foundation of youth engagement to support YGO. The next generation of Neighborhood Explorers was developed in FY 2010 and is ready for launch and will focus on a stronger connection to careers in conservation and natural resources.

**B) Electronic Field Trips**

1) **Partners for Resource Education (PRE) Electronic Field Trips:** NCTC supported the National Environmental Education Foundation (NEEF), the parent organization of PRE, through a cooperative agreement. The agreement included coordination with other federal agency members of PRE in the development and implementation of “Virtual Field Trips” with Prince William



Neighborhood Explorers Website

10) **Get2Know Your Wild Neighbors Pilot with the Get2 Know Society:** NCTC entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the Forest Service, The National Wildlife Federation, and the Get2Know Society to pilot the Get2Know Your Wild Neighbors program contest in Region 8. NCTC hosted the partners meeting to assist a Forest Service evaluator to develop an evaluation of the contest’s ability to “connect” youth and their families with nature, which will help determine the level of partner participation in the national expansion of this program.



Renowned oceanographer Sylvia Earle with SC3 students at NCTC in 2010

2) **Arthur Carhart National Wilderness Training Center:** NCTC provided funding for the Arthur Carhart’s National Wilderness Training Center’s “Youth in Nature Hire” program. This ongoing work includes curriculum modernization, improved web-based learning materials in multiple languages, and revision, expansion, and implementation of the existing Wilderness Education & Interpretation Workshop.

the scouting program, and these were strengthened in USFWS Scouting National Policies to reflect YGO issues and priorities.

4) **Boy Scouts of America National Jamboree:** NCTC continues its support of efforts to connect young people with nature through participation in the Boy Scouts of America (BSA) National Scout Jamboree, which commemorated the BSA’s 100th anniversary. NCTC coordinated the USFWS national involvement in the Jamboree by coordinating 61 Service employees who staffed a 17 acre conservation/ environment trail. This trail included interactive exhibits from more than 20 federal, state, and non-government agencies and organizations. The scouts learned about careers in refuge management, endangered species protection, and migratory bird conservation. NCTC also provided a career exhibit on the Conservation Trail and presented a natural resources career program at a special evening career event. A total of 45,000 Boy Scouts from 50 states and 26 foreign nations participated

*“Of course I want to protect our resources. I need them to survive. All of us do, and so will our children.”*  
– Stacey Florez, SCA Intern

3) **National Scouting Programs:** The USFWS works with Boy Scouts of America (BSA) and Girl Scouts of the USA (GSUSA) to assist in national-level programs, such as the 2010 National Jamboree and the GSUSA National Conference. The National Scouting



Network, [www.pwnet.org](http://www.pwnet.org), which included:

- 2) **Pollinator Live:** A series of live, interactive webcasts exploring the role of bees, butterflies, and other pollinators in producing the food that we eat and the health of our flowering plants. The webcasts were presented from Washington's National Zoological Park, co-sponsored by the National Conservation Training Center. Seven virtual field trip segments with different pollinator themes were offered from May to September 2010.

**C) Career Program Support**

1) **Career Awareness Toolkits:**

The “Toolkits” are targeted outreach tools designed to provide “grab and go” resources for use in career awareness activities, such as career fairs, classroom career presentations, etc. NCTC facilitated a three-day workshop with USFWS education and outreach staff from four different field stations to design and develop activity lesson plans for various grades and venues. The activity/lesson plans, which have measurable learning and performance objectives, are being pilot tested by NCTC and field staff at a variety of venues and events with different youth audiences. Primary users of the Toolkits are federal natural resource employees, with varied background and skills. NCTC also collected examples and conducted an inventory of existing field “career day” best practices from the field.

- 2) **1st Annual EdOUT:** USFWS/ NCTC participated in the first EdOUT program hosted by the U.S. Forest Service and the American Recreation Coalition, including a broad and growing team of partners. The EdOUT's 2010 pilot highlights Prince William County Schools, Virginia's second largest school system with 80,000 students and the state's fastest growing system. EdOUT aimed to incorporate environmental education, both in and out of the classroom, into the last few days of the school year that provides an exciting learning experience. The program introduced students to careers within conservation agencies while



*Tribal YCC crew on Creston National Fish Hatchery nature trail, 2010*

building an appreciation of how those careers are important to the nation. The activities challenge the trend toward sedentary, indoor lifestyles. The following agencies/ organizations participated: BLM, FAA, FBI, MMS, NASA, NOAA, NPS, NRCS, RBFF, Smithsonian, US Army Corps of Engineers, DOE, EPA, and USDA, USFWS, USGS, US Marine Corps, and US Public Health Services.

- 3) **8th Annual Public Service Career and Internship Fair:** USFWS/ NCTC participated in the 8th annual Public Service Career and Internship Fair, which was sponsored by the Partnership for Public Service. This event connected representatives from 85 federal agencies with more than 8,000 students and jobseekers.

- 4) **Presidential Management Fellow (PMF) Job Fair:** The NCTC participated in the PMF job fair held in Washington, D.C. More than 800 PMFs attended the event, with many visiting the FWS booth.

**D) Student Work Experiences and Internship Program**

- 1) **NCTC Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) Summer 2010 Hires:** NCTC hired 12 YCC students during the summer 2010, giving all exposure and experience of NCTC's conservation mission. Five students participated in outdoor resource work, which

included extensive fence removal, trail remediation, reforestation area maintenance, invasive plant control, river shore cleanup, recycling, nursery maintenance and landscaping, and boundary marking. Two museum YCC students completed cataloging, digitization, and conservation of 3,100 original artworks from the National Wildlife Federation collection; the DEO students worked to support YGO activities; and the Facility Operations YCC students provided support for the Business Services Branch.

- 2) **Undergraduate Internships in Wildlife Management, Conservation, and Education to Recruit and Train Future Conservation Professionals:** NCTC supported the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) through a cooperative agreement to sponsor 10 summer internships in the fields of wildlife education, management, and research. Each intern worked with a natural resource professional on a specific conservation project and developed a project report. Interns attended the annual conference of The Wildlife Society to present their projects and participate in a feedback evaluation forum. Staff from the USFWS and the WDNR will work together to evaluate the program by developing questionnaires, conducting in-person assessments, and reviewing written feedback and project reports.

- 3) **AmeriCorps Wildland Fire Management Corps:** NCTC supported USFWS Region 5's AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC) youth training and deployment program for 36 youth. Over 15 sites, including national wildlife refuges, NGO, state and federal lands were assisted by these trained and mentored youth. Youth participated in prescribed burns with fire, chainsaw, and Hazwoper training and also assisted with a Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) request for tornado damage clean up in Mississippi.

- 4) **Creston National Fish Hatchery YCC:** NCTC supported the program between Creston National Fish Hatchery, USFWS Fisheries Program, Salish Kootenai College, and the Confederated Salish Kootenai Tribes Natural Resources Department to promote creation of jobs leading to careers in natural resources for tribal youth. This was done through the establishment of a Tribal Youth Conservation Corps project on the Flathead Reservation and at the Creston National Fish Hatchery in Kalispell, Montana. This program was based on a model piloted in the southwest by another Fish Hatchery and tribal youth. The program included 2 college aged students and 22 high school aged students.

**E) Coordination with Colleges**

- 1) **Partners for Public Service:** NCTC is partnering with Partners for Public Service to present a webinar to promote student hiring awareness targeting DOI bureaus. Post-secondary institutions will register for the webinar and hear from each bureau about their youth hire programs/opportunities.
- 2) **The Wildlife Society:** The NCTC worked with The Wildlife Society on a formal inquiry into future trends and challenges for the wildlife profession, focusing on college age youth and university wildlife programs. The main body of this investigation is a blue ribbon panel comprised of academia, industry, professional societies, non-government organizations, and federal agencies. This collaboration will continue in FY 2011.

- 3) **Doris Duke Fellowship Program:** NCTC hosted the Doris Duke Fellowship Program for the 11th consecutive year. This group is comprised of highly talented, second year graduate students from top universities across the country. NCTC conducted a session

with the Fellows that discussed job opportunities within the USFWS and the Department, and presented an overview of the various ways to enter federal service, including SCEP, intern programs, and the OPM Presidential Management Fellow program.



*“We need to think of Youth in the Great Outdoors as a continuum for maintaining and enhancing the connection between people and nature as we work to educate and employ the next generation of conservation professionals.”*  
- Jay Slack, Director, National Conservation Training Center



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**November 2010**



*(Front Photo) Boston area youth participating in the Youth Conservation Corps reach new heights in their experience while working with the Branching Out Program sponsored by the Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation. Participants learn about landscapes maintenance practices through educational workshops and hands-on field experience at multiple park sites.*